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Letter dated 17 October 2006 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), I have the honour to convey the attached report on the international security presence in Kosovo covering the period from 1 to 31 August 2006 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. **Annan**

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Annex

Monthly report to the United Nations on the operations of the Kosovo Force

1. The present report covers the period from 1 to 31 August 2006.

2. As of 28 August 2006, the total number of troops in theatre was 15,977, which included 2,610 troops from non-NATO countries.

3. There was no change to the status of partner non-NATO nation contributions.

Security

4. The overall security situation in Kosovo remains calm but tense owing to the political uncertainty related to the ongoing status talks.

5. Joachim Ruecker began his duties as the sixth Chief of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission (UNMIK) on 1 September. On the same date, Lieutenant General Roland Kather became the new Commander of the Kosovo Force (KFOR). Turning to the status process, direct talks between Belgrade and Pristina on decentralization and community rights on 7 and 8 August were inconclusive and did not produce any major breakthrough. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Martti Ahtisaari, and experts from his team travelled to Kosovo and met with the Kosovo-Albanian negotiating team in Pristina on 23 August in an attempt to bring the parties stances on decentralization and cultural heritage issues closer together. No substantial progress was achieved. On 31 August 2006, a memorandum of understanding was signed between UNMIK and the Ministry of Transportation, transferring to the provisional institutions of self-government responsibilities for providing public and humanitarian transportation to minorities as of 1 September. This agreement fulfils one of 13 priority standards set forth by the Contact Group in June 2006. By the end of August, nearly all 13 priority items have been implemented.

6. During the month of August, inter-ethnic incidents increased, with nine significant incidents reported, including against a Bosnian girl, Kosovo Albanians, Kosovo Serbs and a Serb-Montenegrin.

7. During the same period, there were no incidents of violence or threats directed against KFOR.

8. A total of 439 incidents occurred during the reporting period, compared to 343 recorded in the previous month. Weapons seizures made up the vast majority of incidents.

9. The Kosovo Force continues operations to prevent ethnic violence and to protect patrimonial sites and some cultural areas proposed by the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the future status process for Kosovo. It continues to deter possible threats directed against international organizations and military bases. The deployment of the German Operational Reserve Force Battalion that started on 28 July was further extended until 31 October. The main focus of KFOR operations remains in the north of the province. As of 31 August, all multinational task forces have been validated. As of 1 August, Sweden assumed the role of framework nation in the multinational task force (C) for a period of 1 year.

Compliance by the Serbian Army and the Ministry of Internal Affairs Special Police

10. Nothing to report.

Kosovo Protection Corps

11. The second Disciplinary Board convened on 29 August 2006 at KFOR headquarters. Fifteen cases of non-compliance were presented. The Board recorded 12 dismissals, including eight Serbs and one Ashkali. The final decision concerning the requested sanctions awaits the determination of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. Four appeals to the previous Board decisions are ongoing. Eight out of the nine dismissals concerning minorities have never been present for duty since enrolling.

12. The Kosovo Force continues to support UNMIK in training the Kosovo Protection Corps. The Kosovo Force Commander's intent is to review the entire Kosovo Protection Corps training programme. The Commander plans to focus on keeping the Kosovo Protection Corps fully engaged by improving and extending training to their higher echelons (key leaders and senior Corps members) on non-military tasks.

13. The Corps activities in August were low owing to the vacation period. Fourteen Corps members were dismissed by the Disciplinary and Recruitment Board; eight new ethnic minority members were appointed.

14. The recruitment of minorities remains a Corps priority. The current active personnel establishment is 3,052. The total number of ethnic minorities increased by 21 compared with the past month. The Training and Doctrine Command of the Kosovo Protection Corps conducted four courses, with 59 attendees. During the month of August there were 14 approved ceremonies that involved 400 Corps members and over 2,500 civilians. The Corps also conducted two high-level ceremonies in which they did not follow the stipulated regulations for the request to deploy the ceremonial guard. These may represent a major incidence of non-compliance. The headquarters of the Kosovo Inspectorate of the Kosovo Protection Corps is investigating.

Conclusion

15. The overall situation in Kosovo is stable but the political uncertainty related to the status talks may raise some tension in the near term. Economic development and daily-life difficulties remain of great concern to the population. In an effort to influence the status talks, extremist elements could exploit the tension for political gain. The threat level against UNMIK and other international community facilities remains medium and the threat level for KFOR is low.